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Recommendations Report

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1.0 Introduction

The MSP Directive's recital highlights the need for Member States to make use of the best available data and information by encouraging the relevant stakeholders to share information and by making use of existing instruments and tools for data collection, such as those developed in the context of the Marine Knowledge 2020 initiative and the INSPIRE Directive establishing an Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community (INSPIRE).

As a basis for MSP implementation the MSP Directive specifies that as a minimum requirement Member States shall organize the use of the best available data in accordance with the requirements on data use and sharing set out in Article 10 of the Directive (Article 6 (2) (e)).

Article 10 requires Member States to organize the use of the best available data, and decide how to organize the sharing of information, necessary for maritime spatial plans. In doing so, Member States are to make use of relevant instruments and tools, including those already available under the Integrated Maritime Policy, for example EMODnet data portals, and under relevant Union policies, such as those mentioned in the INSPIRE Directive 2007/2/EC.

The MSP Directive calls upon Member States to establish and implement maritime spatial planning for their marine waters. The Directive defines maritime spatial planning as a process by which the relevant Member States' authorities analyze and organize human activities in marine areas to achieve ecological, economic, and social objectives (Art 3 (2)). The interlinkages between various instruments and tools that are already contributing to improved knowledge of the marine environment and how our actions influence its status are highly relevant to the implementation of MSP.

The overall objective of MSP-MED is to assist the Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) process in the Mediterranean Sea, by supporting the establishment of coherent and coordinated plans across the Mediterranean marine regions and between Member States, in line with the MSP Directive objectives. The Planning Authority is the Competent Authority for the MSP Directive in Malta and as partner to the MSP-MED project, is focused on specific aspects concerning governance in support of the implementation of the SPED (Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development), as Malta's first MSP plan. Work Package 3 of the MSPMED concerns Data Use and Data Sharing. Its main objective is to support the use of the best available data and organize the sharing of data amongst stakeholders in the best way possible.

For WP3, specifically for task 3.3 (D30), the Planning Authority has already delivered an Evaluation Report, where it identified:

1. The status of the different marine data bases that currently exist in Malta
2. The respective data validity, accessibility, and ownership
3. Any data gaps for MSP purpose

The Evaluation report identified a number of issues, with regards to MSP data management in Malta, and highlights the fact that data related issues identified during the MSP TC work of 2019, still exist. The scope of this report is to address these issues from a National, MSP TC and PA's perspective and put forward recommendations which could assist the process of data management for MSP in Malta.

1.1 Data Management for MSP

The implementation of Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP), defined in the MSP Directive 2014/89/EU requires high quality maritime spatial data and information. Data sharing is favored by Maritime Spatial Data Infrastructures (MSDI). The Inspire Directive was published in 2007 by the European Commission in order to create a European Spatial Data Infrastructure to ensure interoperability between databases and to facilitate geographic data dissemination, availability and use. The Directive provides standards and protocols to exchange data and metadata across Europe. MSP in the Mediterranean is taking advantage of this conducive environment as over the last few years the number of available datasets has been constantly increasing, published by national producers as well as European projects. Despite this fact, some key data and information are not accessible yet. There is therefore a need to pursue the effort on data sharing, as well as providing clear information on data through INSPIRE metadata. INSPIRE is a relevant instrument not only for data collection, but also for increasing transparency of the MSP processes whilst improving and strengthening the information management and data infrastructures needed for setting up Maritime Spatial Planning processes as it:

1. Provides links between the MSP Directive and INSPIRE components and implementation
2. Allows better availability of marine and maritime data through an EU-wide INSPIRE Geo-Portal

Access to spatial data and services constitutes an important basis for environmental policies for all public authorities and is therefore a central aspect of the infrastructure for spatial information in the European Community. Since most public authorities and institutions, in most cases have to integrate and assess spatial information from all the Member States, INSPIRE recognizes the need to be able to gain access to and use spatial data and spatial data services in accordance with an agreed set of harmonized conditions. The INSPIRE Directive lays down a number of rights and obligations regarding the sharing of spatial data sets and services between all levels of government (public authorities). According to Art (4), the arrangements apply to all spatial data sets which relate to one or more of the 34 data themes listed in the INSPIRE annexes I to III, are in electronic format, and refer to an area where a Member State has and/or exercises jurisdictional rights. The arrangements apply to public authorities and/or entities/organizations managing or requiring the spatial data or services on their behalf.

On 23 April 2020 DG MARE and CINEA formalized the establishment of the Technical Expert Group (TEG) on MSP data. The TEG on MSP Data has been established to increase dialogue within the European MSP community and to move towards more robust and common standards in terms of MSP-related data collection and delivery. There are 5 different sub-groups under the

TEG with one of them specifically focused on harmonization issues and to identify or elaborate potential common data models. The thematic areas of the sub-groups are:

1. MSFD & MSP Data Management
2. Metadata Standard for Marine Plans
3. Network Services for MSP
4. Socioeconomic Impact of MSP
5. MSP Data Framework

Malta is participating in the MSP TEG sub-group on Metadata Standards for MSP. The main objectives of this group are to develop a metadata standard for the description of Marine Spatial Plans and focus on the needs of end users in terms of preparation and implementation (including monitoring) of marine spatial plans. The developed standard must be descriptive enough to capture sufficient information to meet these user needs, whilst not being too difficult for creators. The technical subgroup is working on identifying different use cases (for example: country, official MSP document title, who's responsible) and reviewing existing metadata standards and profiles.

The work of the Planning Authority on data management for MSP is being aligned with both the INSPIRE Directive and the developments of the MSP TEG. Since the PA is the Competent Authority for INSPIRE, this is an advantage for progress on MSP related work as the MSP Team works hand in hand with the INSPIRE team within the Authority. This ongoing collaboration has supported the preparation for and implementation of the MSPMED tasks for Work Package 3 whilst ensuring that is informed by current progress at the TEG level.

2.0 Issues Encountered

The issues discussed in Deliverable D30 are summarized in Table 1 below. The issues were discussed with the MSP TC during a meeting held in May 2022 where additional issues were discussed and potential recommendations to address them put forward.

Theme	Issue
Reliability	Data is available, however not MSP ready. Data needs to be further interpreted for it to be beneficial for spatial information
	Duplicate data on online portals – portals not well maintained
	Outdated data – sometimes even from owner
Metadata	Lack of information on the data/no metadata
Ownership	Not clear who owns the data
Accessibility	Data not in shapefile format – just viewable
	Sensitive data could not be shared
Standardization	Datasets not projected in WGS 84 coordinate system
Availability	No data available on a particular use/interaction
	No data relevant for MSP
Communication	Some entities did not respond
	No communication between entities
Awareness and Capacity Building	Some entities were not sure whether their data is relevant for MSP purposes.
	Frequent changes of MSP TC members
	Fragmentation of entities
Resources	Lack of resources (human, technical and financial)

Table 1. Table of Issues

In the Evaluation report (D30), it was highlighted that some of the data related issues identified during the 2019 MSP TC meeting, are still being encountered. Whilst geoportals have been created to enable data sharing, a number of technical and administrative hurdles still need to be addressed. On a positive note, the spirit of the MSP TC is encouraging, and the members of the TC are all willing to improve on the work of data management. During the last MSP TC meeting, the PA had asked the TC members to suggest any recommendations, in relation to the issues encountered on data management. The members present all proposed a set of recommendations. Such recommendations are presented in Section 3 of this report.

3.0 How Can Improved Governance Assist MSP Data Management?

This section includes a number of recommendations organized in different tables that address the issues listed above in the previous section. For each issue/theme, a set of recommendations are being put forward. The recommendations are divided into three categories:

1. Recommendations at National level: Strategic overarching direction on data management that has a bearing on MSP work
2. Recommendations at MSP Technical Committee level: Actions that fall within the remit of the respective entities represented within the MSP TC for enhanced collaboration
3. Recommendations at Planning Authority level: Actions that fall within the direct responsibility of the MSP Competent Authority

One must note that certain recommendations are applicable to more than one issue.

Theme: Reliability

Issue 1: Data is available, however not MSP ready. Data needs to be further interpreted for it to be beneficial for spatial information.

Recommendations

At National Level	At MSP TC Level	At PA Level
Data_N_1: More resources in MSP related public sectors are needed to achieve better MSP ready data sets: financial resources and human resources to enhance GIS capability and policy understanding of inter relationship between sectoral requirements and MSP process	Data_MSPTC_1: MSP TC to organize dedicated sessions on MSP related data with members and other representatives from their respective entities, to facilitate periodic communication on any new data collection/management initiative and to enhance capability of what constitutes 'MSP Ready' data.	Data_PA_1: Maintenance and updating of MSP data inventory. Assess possibility of sharing inventory with MSP TC in the short-medium term and in the long term a wider audience.

Issue 2: Duplicate data on online portals – portals not well maintained.

Recommendations

At National Level	At MSP TC Level	At PA Level
Data_N_2: Relevant data providers to implement INSPIRE compliance actions for respective data sets.	Data_MSPTC_2: Ongoing collaboration to support data sharing and inform MSP TC of any upgrades to respective data portals	Data_PA_2: Pursue ongoing support for the two important portals that enable data sharing at national level: Sintegram and the INSPIRE related Malta Geoportal. Portal administrators to continue collaborating on MSP related work and participate in MSPTC meetings pertaining to data, as relevant. Data_PA_1: Maintenance and updating of MSP data inventory: Dedicated program of work to address MSP data management (check metadata, remove duplicates, keep communicate with the data owner for MSP

		Ready data; to include monitoring of MSP plan. Data_PA_3: Support with necessary capacity building and human resources.
<i>Issue 3: Outdated data – sometimes even from owner</i>		
Recommendations		
At National Level	At MSP TC Level	At PA Level
Data_N_3: National entities are supported with relevant financial and human resources to collect and report data periodically and on time.	Data_MSPTC_2: Ongoing collaboration to support data sharing and inform MSP TC of any upgrades to respective data portals	Data_PA_4: To develop a work plan linked to MSP plan monitoring to enable periodic monitoring of planning decisions linked to permit applications. Data_PA_5: To create policy maps for MSP plan updates that can be easily shared nationally and with other portals e.g. Emodnet.

For the theme Reliability, human and financial resources and administrative processes should be in place. Communication has proven that parallel efforts from a technical perspective and continued effort is needed for the delivery of an eventual dynamic and harmonized data inventory for MSP.

Theme: Metadata

Issue 1: Lack of information on the data/no metadata

Recommendations

At National Level	At MSP TC Level	At PA Level
<p>Data_N_4: Training and awareness amongst the public sector on the implementation of the INSPIRE Directive</p>	<p>Data_MSPTC_1: MSP TC to organize dedicated sessions on MSP related data with members and other representatives from their respective entities, specifically on INSPIRE Directive implementation, when and as necessary.</p> <p>Data_MSPTC_3: Considerations for data sharing agreements</p>	<p>Data_PA_2: Pursue ongoing support for the two important portals that enable data sharing at national level: Sintegram and the INSPIRE related Malta Geoportal. Portal administrators to continue collaborating on MSP related work and participate in MSPTC meetings pertaining to data, as relevant.</p>

Metadata is an essential part of the dataset, as it describes what the dataset is about and allows the user to obtain knowledge on how the data was gathered, who gathered it and when. Training and awareness on why metadata is important and how to add and complete the metadata is very important.

Theme: Ownership

Issue 1: Not clear who owns the data

Recommendations

At National Level	At MSP TC Level	At PA Level
<p>Data_N_5: Through the framework of the Integrated Maritime Policy, establish a governance framework that identifies the different roles and responsibilities for data collection within the public sector.</p> <p>Data_N_4: Training and awareness amongst the public sector on the implementation of the INSPIRE Directive</p> <p>Data_N_6: Within the framework of the Integrated Maritime Policy, support the identification of other stakeholders that generate MSP related data (e.g. private sector; research institutes) and its appropriate dissemination</p>	<p>Data_MSPTC_1: MSP TC to organize dedicated sessions on MSP related data with members and other representatives from their respective entities.</p>	<p>Data_PA_1: Maintenance and updating of MSP data inventory: Dedicated program of work to address MSP data management (check metadata, remove duplicates, keep communicate with the data owner for MSP Ready data; to include monitoring of MSP plan</p>

For this theme, clarification of responsibilities at National level is very important. This clarification of who is who and who does what is to be reflected and implemented both at MSPTC and PA level.

Theme: Accessibility

Issue 1: Data not in shapefile format or just viewable

Recommendations

At National Level	At MSP TC Level	At PA Level
Data_N_4: Training and awareness amongst the public sector on the implementation of the INSPIRE Directive for enhanced capacity building.	Data_MSPTC_1: MSP TC to organize dedicated sessions on MSP related data with members and other representatives from their respective entities.	Data_PA_6: Sintegram and INSPIRE portal administrators to support national capacity building efforts and to continue collaborating on MSP related work and participate in MSPTC meetings pertaining to data, as relevant

Issue 2: Sensitive data could not be shared

Recommendations

At National Level	At MSP TC Level	At PA Level
	Data_MSPTC_1: MSP TC to organize dedicated sessions on MSP related data with members and other representatives from their respective entities.	Data_PA_7: Sintegram and INSPIRE portal administrators to collaborate with MSP Team on identifying suitable options for data sharing of sensitive data.

In order to address accessibility issues, it is important for the PA to have both the Sintegram and the INSPIRE portal accessible. Through the MSPTC there's also the opportunity to address specific issues as required. Additionally, sensitive data can also be shared with 1 or 2 planners – through an MoU or an agreement that data is to be used for the sole use of MSP and is not to be shared. At PA level, one to one meeting with stakeholders can be arranged, asking what they deem is sensitive data. If a full dataset cannot be shared due to some sensitive information, that part of the sensitive data can be stripped, and the dataset can still be shared. Alternatively, an MoU can be created with key stakeholders. However, MoUs have both advantages and disadvantages. Some advantages of MoUs are:

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- They allow the negotiation of terms
- They provide a written agreement between parties
- Reduce uncertainties of what is needed from agreeing partners

With regards to disadvantages, MoUs:

- Add to the negotiation time
- Not legally binding

Theme: Standardization

Issue 1: Datasets not projected in WGS 84 coordinate system

Recommendations

At National Level	At MSP TC Level	At PA Level
Data_N_4: Training and awareness amongst the public sector on the implementation of the INSPIRE Directive for enhanced capacity building.	Data_MSPTC_1: MSP TC to organize dedicated sessions on MSP related data with members and other representatives from their respective entities.	Data_PA_8: INSPIRE Team to support national effort for INSPIRE Directive compliance Data_PA_9: Planning Directorate to generate suitable shapefiles in process of plan making, monitoring and review.

In order to have standardized datasets, training and awareness amongst the three levels is important.

Theme: Availability

Issue 1: No data available on a particular use/interaction

Recommendations

At National Level	At MSP TC Level	At PA Level
	Data_MSPTC_4: Hold dedicated MSP TC meetings on land sea interactions, to increase knowledge and support relevant data collation	Data_PA_10: To prepare and implement a dedicated work plan to formalize LSI analysis process within the MSP Plan monitoring and review process

Issue 2: No data relevant for MSP

Recommendations

At National Level	At MSP TC Level	At PA Level
	Data_MSPTC_1: MSP TC to organize dedicated sessions on MSP related data with members and other representatives from their respective entities.	

Issue 3: No communication between entities

Recommendations

At National Level	At MSP TC Level	At PA Level
Data_N_7: Consider joint collaboration on initiatives related to the Integrated Maritime Policy and INSPIRE, to support data collaboration amongst government entities and with other stakeholders, as necessary	Data_MSPTC_1: MSP TC to organize dedicated sessions on MSP related data with members and other representatives from their respective entities, to facilitate periodic communication on any new data	

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	collection/management initiative and to enhance capability of what constitutes 'MSP Ready' data.	
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For this theme, further efforts to gather/develop new data on land-sea interactions (LSI). Articles 4, 6 and 7 of the MSP Directive, explicitly require that LSI be taken into consideration, and these should be reflected in member states maritime spatial plans. Through the MSPTC, opportunity exists to identify methods and mechanism that can provide further knowledge on LSI.

Theme: Awareness and Capacity Building

Issue 1: Some entities were not sure whether their data is relevant for MSP purposes

Recommendations

At National Level	At MSP TC Level	At PA Level
	Data_MSPTC_1: MSP TC to organize dedicated sessions on MSP related data with members and other representatives from their respective entities,	

Issue 2: Frequent changes of MSP TC members

Recommendations

At National Level	At MSP TC Level	At PA Level
Data_N_8: Through the framework of the Integrated Maritime Policy, establish a governance framework that strengthen the	Data_MSPTC_5: MSPTC entities to inform the PA of any changes in representatives; to ensure in house capacity is maintained to	Data_PA_11: Raise the level of the MSP TC from an informal committee supporting the Executive Council to a statutory body in

linkages with MSP as a tool to facilitate the IMP implementation.	support collaboration on MSP implementation.	support of the implementation of the MSP Directive.
Issue 3: Fragmentation of entities		
Recommendations		
At National Level	At MSP TC Level	At PA Level
Data_N_5: Through the framework of the Integrated Maritime Policy, establish a governance framework that identifies the different roles and responsibilities for data collection within the public sector.		

There needs to be a continuous effort at all levels to support cooperation and coordination in data management relating to Malta's marine waters. This would facilitate action at MSPTC level and at PA level to strengthen efforts related to MSP. At MSPTC level, yearly workshops on data management for MSP can be arranged in order for the members to have a better understanding of what is required for MSP.

Theme: Resources		
Issue 1: Lack of resources (human, technical and financial)		
Recommendations		
At National Level	At MSP TC Level	At PA Level
	Data_MSPTC_6: MSPTC entities ensure in house capacity is maintained to support collaboration on MSP	Data_PA_12: To provide required capacity building to undertake relevant tasks in support of MSP data management related work within the Planning Directorate

For the purpose of guiding future action, the recommendations have been prioritized into short term (2 years), medium term (5 years) or long-term (10 years) actions. This representation is a starting foundation of which recommendations should be given the first priority, and how to plan for MSP data management for the next 10 years.

Following the identification of recommendations, this part of the report gives a better indication of which recommendations are crucial (mentioned more than once and is of high value for data management)

Recommendation (Starting from most mentioned/most crucial)	Short-Term (2 years)	Medium-Term (5 years)	Long-Term (10 years)
Data_N_1		√	
Data_N_4	√		
Data_N_5	√		
Data_MSPTC_1	√		
Data_MSPTC_2	√		
Data_MSPTC_4		√	
Data_PA_1		√	
Data_PA_2		√	
Data_N_2		√	
Data_N_3	√		
Data_N_6	√		
Data_N_7		√	
Data_N_8	√		
Data_MSPTC_3			√
Data_MSPTC_5		√	
Data_MSPTC_6			√
Data_PA_3		√	
Data_PA_4		√	
Data_PA_5			√
Data_PA_6			√
Data_PA_7		√	
Data_PA_8			√
Data_PA_9			√
Data_PA_10		√	

Recommendation (Starting from most mentioned/most crucial)	Short-Term (2 years)	Medium-Term (5 years)	Long-Term (10 years)
Data_PA_11		√	
Data_PA_12			√

Table 2. Prioritization of recommendations

5.0 Conclusion

Since the setting up of the MSPTC in 2016, the members of the TC have showed continuous support to continue its role and functions. Through this task, the Planning Authority, with the continued collaboration of the MSP TC members, undertook a significant step towards improved data management for MSP.

The recommendations presented in this report, will eventually be presented to the Competent Authority for its consideration. It is a known fact that data management in MSP is a challenge, however, with the support of all those relevant and involved, a continuous human capacity will be built which can reach the goals of the MSPD on data. Continuous effort from a National point of view will strengthen the work capacity of both the MSPTC and the PA.